

JOSEPH HAWKS, SR.  
+ MARY HAWKS

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FAMILY

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# Hanks Family

Joseph Hanks, Sr.

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

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# LINCOLN LORE

No. 55

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## LINCOLN LORE

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Dr. Louis A. Warren

Editor

### FAMILY OF PIONEER JOSEPH HANKS

At intervals during the past few weeks there have appeared in Lincoln Lore several discussions on the maternal ancestry of Abraham Lincoln. The last contribution on this subject was published in the bulletin of March 24. It dwelt upon different forms used in spelling the Hanks name.

This confusion in spelling found its way into early campaign biographies of Lincoln, published in the summer of 1860. Howell says Lincoln assisted George Close in splitting rails for a James "Hawks" in the year 1830, but Howard calls this employer of Lincoln James "Hanks." Bartlett, in the first edition of his biography, says that Lincoln's associate in some of these rail splitting contracts was John "Hawkes," but in a later edition changes the spelling to "Hanks."

According to Lincoln, this last named John Hanks was a first cousin to Abraham's mother. This should make it of interest to learn if possible who were some of the other cousins of the president's mother. John Hanks' father was William Hanks, a son of Joseph Hanks a Kentucky pioneer. It is the family of this Joseph Hanks and his descendants that is of primary importance in studying the Hanks ancestry. Here are to be found, the uncles, aunts, and cousins of Nancy Hanks, if the president was correctly informed about the relationship of his mother to John Hanks.

The will of Joseph Hanks entered for probate on May 14, 1793, names his wife Nanny, and eight children. A bequest in the will makes it quite certain that all of his living children were therein mentioned.

*Family of Joseph and Nanny Hanks*  
Thomas, married .....?  
Joshua, married .....?  
William, married, Elizabeth Hall  
Charles, married .....?  
Joseph, married, Polly Young  
Elizabeth, married Thos. Sparrow  
Mary, married, Jesse Friend  
Nancy, married, Levi Hall

That Nancy Hanks was not a child of any of the above named sons of Joseph Hanks is quite certain as there is good evidence that she was orphaned before the year 1790 when her mother married Henry Sparrow. If the cousinship relation with John Hanks is to be maintained and the integrity of the will conserved,

Nancy's father must have been a son of Joseph Hanks, who died at least four years before Joseph made his will. According to one of the descendants of Joseph, this son's name was James.

There is no positive information about the families of Thomas, Joshua, and Charles Hanks. The name of Joshua appears in Nelson County lists for 1786 and 1787 while on a fragment of paper, evidently about the same time the name of Charles Hanks appears. There was a Thomas and a Joshua Hanks living in Hopkins County, Kentucky, at the very beginning of the century. Although no direct contact can be made between them and the Thomas and Joshua of the Joseph Hanks will, it seems wise to present brief sketches of them.

#### Thomas Hanks

The name of Thomas appears on the tax list of Christian County, Kentucky, as early as 1806. He served as a justice of the peace in Hopkins County for several years.

On August 5, 1812, Thomas Hanks married Catherine Beck. Thomas was dead by the year 1826 as his estate was sold at public auction on September 16 of that year. The personal property was appraised at \$679.75. Joshua Hanks purchased several items at this sale. The children of Thomas and Catherine Hanks were Harriet, William, Elizabeth, Thomas, Stephen, Ann, David, and Samuel.

#### Joshua Hanks

The Joshua Hanks who was associated with Thomas Hanks in Hopkins County, was born February 17, 1787, according to the family records. There is very good evidence, however, that his father's name was John. Joshua married Esther Gatlin, a cousin, November 23, 1817. The names of their children were Mary, Williamson, Mahala, Nancy, Stuart, Elizabeth, Caroline, Mansfield, and Martha.

#### Family of William and Elizabeth Hanks

James, married, Rebecca Atherton  
Elizabeth, married, Jubal Meadow  
Nancy, married, Jacob Robbins  
Charles, married, Hannah Martin  
William, married .....?  
Celia, married .....?  
Joseph, married .....?  
John, married, Susan Wilson  
Lucinda, married, Thos. Douglas  
Sarah, married, Mr. Brown  
Andrew, married .....?

William Hanks married Elizabeth Hall September 12, 1793, a short time after the will of his father was probated. He bought his younger brother's interest in the homestead and evidently kept the family together for some time. About the year 1800 he purchased land in Hardin County and finally migrated into Indiana and later into Illinois.

The oldest son, James, was born in 1794 and married Rebecca Atherton in 1817. He moved to Sangamon

County in 1826 and two years later located four miles northwest of Decatur in Macon County. It was here in 1830 that Abraham Lincoln split rails for him.

John Hanks was born in 1802. For a short time he lived not far from the Lincolns in Spencer County, Indiana. In 1828 he moved to Macon County, Illinois, where his brother James, had settled. It was this John Hanks who supplied the rails for the Republican convention of 1860.

#### Charles Hanks

Tradition says Charles married and had four children; Jane, John, Conrad, and Nancy, but evidence to support this statement is lacking.

#### Family of Joseph and Polly Hanks

Jacob, married, Elizabeth Adams  
Elizabeth, married .....  
..... James Kirkpatrick  
Susanna, married .....?  
Nancy, married, William Hoosier  
John, married, Ann Mattison  
Joseph, married .....  
..... Martha Bartholomew  
Mary, married, William Hall  
Amaltha, married, Henry Loper  
Caroline, married, James Hall

Joseph married Polly Young on November 10, 1810, more than four years after Lincoln's parents were married. The story that Nancy Hanks was visiting in the home of this Joseph, the Elizabethtown carpenter, at the time Thomas Lincoln met her in 1806 cannot be maintained.

#### Family of Elizabeth and Thomas Sparrow

They were married in 1796. As they had no children of their own they took their nephew Dennis Hanks, into their home. At their death in 1818 Dennis inherited their property. The story that Lincoln's mother lived with them as a small child or at any period in her life lacks confirmation. The Nancy Hanks who made her home with them for some time was Elizabeth's own sister Nancy, the mother of Dennis.

#### Family of Mary and Jesse Friend

Jesse Friend and Mary Hanks were married in Elizabethtown, Kentucky in 1795. Although they had several children the names of their offspring have not been learned.

#### Family of Nancy and Levi Hall

Dennis (Hanks), married .....  
..... Elizabeth Johnston  
Squire, married .....  
..... Matilda Johnston

William, married, Mary Hanks  
James, married, Caroline Hanks

Levi Hall was a brother of Elizabeth Hall who married Nancy's brother William. Levi's stepson, Dennis, and son, Squire, married the two step-daughters of Thomas Lincoln, while his two other sons married two daughters of his wife's brother, Joseph.

John Hall, one of the eight children born to Squire and Matilda Hall lived on the old Thomas Lincoln place in Coles County, Illinois, after the death of Abraham Lincoln's father.



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## LINCOLN LORE

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Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

### VIRGINIA ORIGIN OF JOSEPH HANKS, SR.

The last contribution appearing in Lincoln Lore, which discussed the history of the Hanks family, was confined to the descendants of the pioneer Joseph Hanks after they reached Kentucky. It was from this family that Nancy Hanks is supposed to have come.

It is the purpose of this monograph to present some of the testimonies of the descendants of the family, and others, bearing on the residence of the pioneer Joseph Hanks before settling in Kentucky. Some of the excerpts exhibited are from letters written to Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and now in possession of the editor of Lincoln Lore. Some excerpts from duly authorized public records are used also.

Joseph Hanks, Sr. died in 1793 and named as beneficiaries in his will his widow and eight children. The youngest son, Joseph, was but twelve years old at the time of his father's death.

We learn from a deposition of Daniel Vittertow, filed in a chancery suit as early as 1819, in the Nelson County, Kentucky, Court, that Joseph Hanks, Jr., the youngest son of Joseph Hanks, Sr., returned to Virginia shortly after his father's death. The question put to the plaintiff was as follows: "Did Joseph Hanks, Jr., go to Virginia soon after the death of his father?" The deponent replied, "He did."

The fact that the younger Joseph was but twelve years of age at the time he went to Virginia would imply that someone went with him. The family tradition has it that the widow returned to the old home and this record seems to support that assumption. Evidently, at least one of the older sons had remained in Virginia when the family moved to Kentucky.

Joseph Hanks, Jr. himself made an affidavit in 1817 that reveals he was back in Kentucky again by the year 1799, which is in harmony with a reminiscence of his granddaughter, Mrs. Wilson:

Cannon City, Colorado  
Feb. 25, 1895

Mrs. C. H. Hitchcock:

"My grandfather, Joseph Hanks, Jr. was the youngest or near the youngest of the family, was left an orphan at an early age and went to live with an older brother in Virginia, was mistreated by his brothers wife and ran away from Virginia to Kentucky."

Mrs. M. A. Wilson.

Another grandson of the same Joseph Hanks, Jr. also suggests that the old place in Virginia had been kept intact and held by the elder brother whom she names. The excerpt carrying this information follows:

Florence, Colorado,  
January 26, 1895.

Mrs. C. H. Hitchcock:

"Grandfather (Joseph Hanks, Jr.) told me that an estate of 660 acres was rightfully his having been unlawfully held by his elder brother, who I think was named Joshua."

J. M. Hanks.

It is interesting to note that the name "Joshua" mentioned in J. M. Hanks correspondence is similar to that of the oldest son mentioned in the will of Joseph Hanks, Sr.

This leads us to inquire about the Virginia site of the original Hanks farm. As an authority for the general location of it we have the testimony of Dennis Hanks, a grandson of Joseph Hanks, Sr. Dennis conveyed this information to William Herndon and Mr. Weik forwarded the quotation to Mrs. Hitchcock:

Greencastle, Ind.  
Dec. 10, 1894

Mrs. C. H. Hitchcock:

"Dennis Hanks said that the Hanks's came to Kentucky from the 'Roanoke River Country in Virginia' but he never knew the county. He thought it was Halifax County but was never certain."

Jesse W. Weik.

A Virginia branch of the Hanks family has conserved much valuable historical data. They have evidence which contributes to our knowledge of the original home of the Joseph Hanks group.

Pipers Gap, Va.  
Dec. 11, 1895.

Mrs. C. H. Hitchcock:

"My grandfather, Joshua Hanks, Sr., was born in Amelia County, Virginia, in the year 1760 . . . I believe that Joseph Hanks who moved to Nelson County, Kentucky, was a brother

or uncle of Joshua, Sr. Joshua Hanks, Sr., had one or two brothers who moved to Kentucky.

C. L. Hanks.

The testimony of Dennis Hanks in Kentucky and J. M. Hanks in Virginia seem to be in agreement as to the general location of the home and will make it much easier to trace the site or sites occupied by the family.

Another question which confronts us when we reach back into Virginia is the personnel of the group with whom Nancy Hanks migrated to the Kentucky country. Two of the earlier Lincoln biographers, Barrett and Whitney, seem to have gathered some first-hand information on this subject. Mr. Whitney wrote a long letter to Mrs. Hitchcock about the early history of the family. A brief extract follows:

Mrs. C. H. Hitchcock:

"Nancy Hanks Lincoln's father died in Virginia and his widow and daughter came to Kentucky where the widow married Henry Sparrow for her second husband."

H. C. Whitney  
Jan. 17, 1895

It is of importance to put alongside of this opinion a reminiscence of J. H. Barrett who had a personal interview with Lincoln about his family history:

Loveland, Ohio  
September 14, 1895

Mrs. C. H. Hitchcock:

Mr. Lincoln stated to me in 1861 that his mother was born in Virginia, that she came to Kentucky with some of her relations and not with her parents, but gave me no other clue.

J. H. Barrett.

These testimonies are not in serious conflict with the traditions of the descendants of Richard Berry, guardian of Nancy Hanks, who claim that Nancy and her widowed mother Lucy did not come to Kentucky with the family of Joseph Hanks but with a group of her mother Lucy's people.

The findings here also agree with the testimony of Abraham Lincoln relative to the location of the Hanks family at the time his mother was born. In the autobiography prepared for Scripps he said: "My parents were both born in Virginia."

The next task in this series of studies on the Hanks Family will be confined to the Virginia history of the maternal ancestors of Abraham Lincoln.



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Dr. Louis A. Warren

Editor

### GRANDMOTHER HANKS

It is admitted generally that the Christian name of Abraham Lincoln's grandmother was Lucy. There is still much confusion, however, about her family name which has been called both Shipley and Hanks before marriage, and both Hanks and Sparrow after marriage.

Duly authorized public records and statements by members of connected families will be introduced in an attempt to clarify the problem of the identification of this grandmother of the president. The approach to the question can be made most satisfactorily by working from the positively known facts back to the traditional evidence.

#### Mrs. Lucy Sparrow

The first information about the maternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln to receive attention was submitted by Dennis Hanks. He wrote:

"Her name (Lincoln's mother) was Nancy Sparrow. Her father's name was Henry Sparrow, her mother was Lucy Sparrow, her (Lucy's) maiden name was Hanks, sister to my mother.

"You say why was Nancy called Hanks? All I can say is this, she was deep in the stalk of the Hanks family. Calling her Hanks is probably my fault. . . I think this is the way if you call her Hanks you make her a base-born child, which is not true." (Dennis Hanks to Herndon, 1866.)

John Hanks "corroborated" Dennis on all vital and essential points" about Lincoln's mother and neither one of them ever changed their opinion about the regularity of the birth of Nancy Hanks, although they could not explain why her name was called Hanks.

Henry Sparrow and Lucy Hanks were married by John Bailey in Mercer County, Kentucky, on April 30, 1790. Nancy Hanks at the time of this marriage must have been about five years of age. While there is a possibility that Lincoln's mother as a small child may have gone by the name of Nancy Sparrow during the time she lived with her stepfather, Henry Sparrow, when she left this home, she evidently used her real name, Nancy Hanks.

#### Miss Lucy Hanks

Dennis Hanks was indirectly responsible for the second theory put forth which, in the minds of early biographers, contradicted his first statement. He claimed that Lucy was one of four daughters of Joseph Hanks. Herndon ignored Dennis' early testimony about the regularity of

Lincoln's mother's birth and claimed that Nancy Hanks was the illegitimate child of a Miss Lucy Hanks, daughter of Joseph Hanks.

The following observations supported by court records refute the theory that Lucy was the daughter of Joseph Hanks.

1. The will of Joseph Hanks names five sons and three daughters living in 1793, and inasmuch as he mentioned "all my children" in one bequest it implies he had named them all, but no one of the three daughters is called Lucy.

2. Before Lucy could marry Henry Sparrow a certificate of her age had to be filed with the county clerk. If Joseph Hanks had been her father he would have been expected to sign this certificate. This he did not do.

3. Upon the marriage of Lucy to Henry Sparrow, the court required a bond to be signed and the signature of Lucy's father, or some near relative, would have been necessary. Although the family of Joseph Hanks was living not far away no member of this family signed the marriage papers.

There is one document which seems to support the theory that Lucy was an irresponsible character but when viewed from the proper perspective a different light is thrown on the proceedings. A Mercer County grand jury brought an indictment against her for fornication. She was never brought to trial, however, because her marriage to Henry Sparrow seemed to have removed the cause of the complaint.

It is very likely that she was living with Sparrow as his common law wife, not an unusual occurrence in the wilderness, and action was brought to bring about a marriage contract. The fact that she raised a family of eight children, two of them ministers, would not indicate her character was as debased as some authors have supposed.

Except for this alleged misconduct on the part of Lucy, there would be no indication that the birth of Nancy Hanks was irregular.

#### Mrs. Lucy Hanks

All the members of the Sparrow family now living in Mercer County claim that when Henry Sparrow married Lucy Hanks she was a widow.

The editor of Lincoln Lore is confident that when the name of Lucy Hanks was inscribed on the certificate stating that she was of age in 1790, it was signed Widow Lucy Hanks.

The confusion of Dennis Hanks rested in the fact that Lucy was a sister-in-law instead of an own sister to the three Hanks girls.

Furthermore, members of the Hanks family have stated that the name of this son of Joseph Hanks, who married Lucy, and died before Joseph made his will, was James Hanks. Nancy, it is claimed, was the daughter of James and Lucy Hanks.

When Nancy Hanks married Thomas Lincoln, the legal procedure necessary is in harmony with the con-

tention that at this time Nancy's mother was a widow and had married again.

The Kentucky guardian law called for the appointment of: "first, the father; second, the mother, if unmarried; third, the next of kin giving preference to males." Nancy's father being dead and her mother, Lucy, married again, her Uncle Richard Berry, with whom she was living, would be the legal choice for her guardianship and he so signs her marriage bond with Thomas Lincoln, the prospective groom.

#### Miss Lucy Shipley

There is much evidence now available to show that Lucy was a daughter of Robert Shipley instead of Joseph Hanks, and that her alleged father was probably her father-in-law. The Hankses lived not far from the Shipley colony in Virginia and the writer has been over some of the land they owned. Later they moved to North Carolina.

On William Caldwell's commissioners' book for Lunenburg County, Virginia, in 1750, the names of Robert Mitchell, Richard Berry, and Robert Shipley appear.

It is said there were six Shipley girls and four of them are accounted for: Rachel, who married Richard Berry; Ann, who married David McCord; Naomi, who married Robert Mitchell; and Lucy, who married James Hanks, and later Henry Sparrow. Some family notes supporting these connections follow:

"Nancy Hanks' mother's name before marriage was Shipley and she was a Virginian. There were, I think, six sisters in the Shipley family but I only remember the names of the husbands of three: Richard Berry, and Robert Mitchell, my grandfather, and Mr. Hanks, Nancy's father." (Charlott Hobart Vawter letter in 1895.)

"I used to hear my grandmother say that she was a second cousin to Nancy Hanks. My grandmother was Jane Caldwell McCord. Her grandfather was David McCord, whose wife was Ann Shipley. (R. C. Simpson of Vincennes, Letter to editor of Lincoln Lore 1929.)

"My mother was a Mitchell, a first cousin of President Lincoln's mother, their mothers were Shipleys from North Carolina. . . Nancy Hanks, Abraham Lincoln's mother, went to live with Uncle and Aunt Richard Berry." (Sally Shipley Mitchell in Louisville Courier Journal, Jan. 5, 1881.)

There is no evidence that even suggests that Nancy was the daughter of Miss Lucy Shipley before she married James Hanks so that but one of the names introduced in this monograph must be eliminated. There is no dependable evidence to show that Lucy was ever a Miss Lucy Hanks. She was first Miss Lucy Shipley, next, Mrs. Lucy Hanks, and then Mrs. Lucy Sparrow. This is the person who we believe was the maternal grandmother of Abraham Lincoln.



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Dr. Louis A. Warren . . . Editor

### GRANDFATHER HANKS

The father of Nancy Hanks must have been dead before she was old enough to have any vivid memory of him. It is not likely that she would be able to pass on to her son, Abraham, much of interest about his grandfather Hanks. The fact that Nancy went to live with her Uncle and Aunt Berry after her mother's second marriage would take her out from under her mother's influence and that of the Hanks family, so the name of her father seldom would be mentioned.

During the period between Nancy Hanks' mother's marriage to Henry Sparrow in 1790 and her own marriage to Thomas Lincoln in 1806, there is no dependable evidence that she came into close contact with any members of her father's people, although it is likely that she paid frequent visits to her mother who lived not far away. The tradition that she lived in the home of Thomas and Elizabeth Hanks Sparrow and was brought up by them is without foundation. Her first direct contact with her father's people evidently occurred after she was married in 1806, and there would be little opportunity for cultivating these friendships until after she moved to the farm where Abraham Lincoln was born in 1803.

The Lincoln birthplace farm was not far from the home of Thomas and Elizabeth Hanks Sparrow, with whom Dennis Hanks was living; of Levi and Nancy Hanks Hall; and also of Jesse and Polly Hanks Friend. These three aunts of Nancy Hanks were her neighbors but two years, however, as the Lincolns moved to the Knob Creek farm ten miles away in 1811. Here Nancy Hanks Lincoln lived for five years not far from her Uncle William Hanks.

While Nancy may have talked about her father with her uncles and aunts, Abraham Lincoln, then under eight years of age, would not be especially interested in the conversations.

Inasmuch as Nancy Hanks herself passed away before her son Abraham was ten years of age, it is not likely that she ever said very much to the boy about her own father whom she could not even remember. After Abraham's father married his second wife

the following year, there would be little occasion to discuss the parentage of Thomas Lincoln's first wife in a home where another woman was mothering her children.

The best information which we have on Lincoln's maternal grandfather at present comes from the descendants of pioneer Joseph Hanks. In going through the correspondence which they carried on with Mrs. Hitchcock of Cambridge, Massachusetts, forty years ago, it is evident from these documents that they thought Nancy's father was a son of the pioneer Joseph Hanks.

One of these descendants claims that the father of Nancy was named James. Others support the tradition that James died before the removal of the Hanks family to Kentucky and that his widow came on later with her own people. Every bit of documentary evidence we have been able to gather from court records supports this theory, although we have not been successful as yet in finding the name of Nancy Hanks' father in the public records.

The claim that the mother of Nancy Hanks was Lucy Shipley Hanks, a daughter of Robert Shipley, has been greatly strengthened by recent discoveries and it is not difficult to show that the Hankses and Shipleys were closely associated over a period of many years both in Maryland and in Virginia.

In the records of Christ Church, Queen Caroline Parish, Ann Arundel County, Maryland, there appears the names of Robert Shipley and William Hanks, who were both serving as vestrymen in the same congregation as early as 1736.

Later on in 1758 a Robert Shipley is found in Lunenburg County, Virginia, where there was also living at that time a large colony of Hankses. Later on Bedford County, Virginia, became the center of these Shipley and Hanks families and the tradition that Nancy Hanks was born in James Hanks' cabin on Little Falling River has been in constant circulation for many decades.

Some time ago the editor of Lincoln Lore made a trip into the Little Falling River country in Virginia and interviewed many of the people who now live on the farms once occupied by the Shipleys and Hankses. He found the traditions, locating there the birthplace of Nancy Hanks, the mother of the president, of long standing. In no instance was the regularity of her birth questioned. Much time was also spent in several Virginia courthouses which record the activities of both the Shipley and Hanks families in Virginia over a period of years and substantiate the traditions of their descendants.

Much evidence has been gathered recently from different branches of the Shipley family which would seem to prove beyond a doubt that Lucy Shipley Hanks was the daughter of Robert Shipley. The claims of the descendants of Joseph Hanks that Nancy's father was a son of Joseph has been greatly strengthened by recent findings. In no instance has any public record been discovered that would invalidate these family traditions.

As late as 1793 the pioneer Joseph Hanks of Kentucky had the following five living sons: Thomas, Joshua, William, Charles, and Joseph, Jr. William Hanks married Elizabeth Hall, daughter of Henry Hall, September 12, 1793. He named his first child, born in 1794, James, and the following three sons, Charles, William, and Joseph.

It is evident that the first son was not named for William's own father or his wife's father. It seems to be a fair supposition that this first child was named James in honor of an older brother by that name who, tradition claims, passed away four or five years before. Three sons that followed were named for his living brothers and another was named John. Abraham Lincoln stated that this John Hanks with whom he was closely associated and who furnished the famous rails for the Republican convention was his mother's first cousin.

It seems likely that the mother of Abraham Lincoln might have been named by her father, James Hanks, for his youngest sister, Nancy, who married Levi Hall. Levi and Nancy Hanks Hall named one of their sons James. The Hall children claimed that they were first cousins of the president's mother.

Although there is still much to be done to positively identify the maternal grandfather as James Hanks, a son of Joseph Hanks, and the husband of Lucy Shipley Hanks, yet much progress has been made in weeding out the purely traditional data which can be disproved by duly authorized records.

This is the last of a series of five articles on the four grandparents of Abraham Lincoln, and a review of the data submitted will reveal how little we really know about three of these forebears.

No description of any one of the four grandparents is available, but it is generally conceded that Lincoln's personal appearance can be charged up against the maternal ancestry. There are some very tall members of the Hanks' clan and it is possible that Grandfather Hanks passed on to Abraham Lincoln those physical contributions which have set him apart from his contemporaries.



*File - pending*

## Introduction

For fifty years the writer has been interested in who the grandfathers were of Nancy Hanks, mother of Abraham Lincoln. He has read the accounts by William Barton, Louis Warren and Adin Baber. None of these is satisfactory. However, the ideas of David Keiser are very reasonable. He says that the grandfathers were Joseph Hanks, died 1793 Nelson Co, Ky and Richard Berry, died 1798 Washington Co, Ky. Neither mentions Nancy in his will, but this is not unusual, especially if the parents were dead. This the writer believes was the case.

To determine the ancestry of Nancy Hanks is complicated by several factors:

- (1) Interest began 40 years after her death and 70 years after the death of her parents.
- (2) People always claim a closer relation to a famous person than the true relation.
- (3) Civil War passions led to untrue statements in some cases.
- (4) Relationships are hard to understand, if the youngest child is the same age as the children of the oldest child.

## What Lincoln Knew

Abraham Lincoln's mother died when he was 9. He would not be asking many questions at that age. She probably never remembered her parents, who likely died when she was a small child. Lincoln's father remarried and the subject of Nancy's parents would not likely be discussed.

How did Lincoln learn that his mother went from Virginia to Kentucky with relatives, not parents? He may have remembered that much, for as a boy he would ask about grandparents. Or his father may have told him.

How did he know that John Hanks was his mother's cousin? This may have come from his father when the Hanks' from Illinois came into the picture.

Who started the idea that Lucy Hanks Sparrow was a grandmother? Possibly Dennis Hanks. But he found that his story did not hold up to the facts. In absence of reliable information his account filled the gap.

Who said that Nancy went to Kentucky with Lucy? Warren mentions it in 1926.

The subject of Lincoln's ancestry first came up when he was running for president. Before that time there was little interest.



## The grandfathers

Abraham Lincoln told Joseph H Barrett about 1861 "that his mother was born in Virginia, that she came to Kentucky with some of his relatives and not with her parents", letter Sep 14-1895 by Joseph H Barrett of Loveland, Ohio to Mrs Caroline Hitchcock. (Lincoln Library, Fort Wayne) This indicates that Nancy's parents likely died in Virginia and that she was likely an orphan with no living brothers or sisters when she went to Kentucky.

Three items indicate that she was closely connected to the Berrys:

- (1) Upon arriving in Kentucky Nancy lived at the home of Richard Berry Sr until his death in 1798. After his death she lived with Richard Jr and possibly with Richard Jr's brother, Francis Berry until her marriage.
- (2) When Nancy was married in 1806, Richard Berry, Jr a surety on the June 10-1806 marriage bond, signed as her guardian.
- (3) Robert Mitchell Thompson (1812-1895) in an affidavit made Apr 13-1891 before J L Wharton, County Clerk of Washington Co, Ky said that "the mother of Nancy...was an own cousin of (his) mother". This would make him a second cousin of Nancy Hanks.

Thompson's mother was Sarah Shipley Mitchell (1778-1855). She was a daughter of Robert and Naomi Shipley Mitchell. Sarah, also an orphan, lived with Nancy in the Berry homes from about 1795 to Jan 17-1800, when she married John Thompson (1775-1850). Richard Berry Sr, who married Rachel Shipley, was Sarah's uncle. So in the Berry home were two orphan girls, a granddaughter and a niece.

If Nancy Hanks' mother was a cousin of Sarah, then Nancy's mother was a daughter of Richard Berry Sr. So Richard Berry Sr was Nancy's grandfather and Richard Jr was her uncle. As the oldest living son of Richard Sr he would be the logical guardian for Nancy.

Richard Berry Sr about 1756 married Rachel Shipley in Charlotte or Campbell Co, Va. He took his family to Kentucky about 1781. Since Nancy's mother (her name may have been Mary for Richard Sr had three granddaughters named Mary) likely married and died in Virginia, her marriage date would be 1781 or before, for the Berrys left Virginia about 1781.

Who was the father of Nancy Hanks? Abraham Lincoln said in the Scripps autobiography (1860) that John Hanks (1802-1889), son of William and grandson of Joseph Hanks, was a "first cousin of Abraham's mother". Since John was a grandson of Joseph, then Nancy's grandfather was Joseph Hanks, who died in Nelson Co, Ky in 1793. Her father likely married a Berry in

Virginia about 1781 and died about 1785. The 1793 will of Joseph Hanks lists five sons, all living: Thomas b 1759, Joshua b c1763, William b 1766, Charles b c1770, Joseph b 1781. Nancy's father was dead. Nancy's mother, if married in 1781, was likely born about 1761, her father about 1757. This would make Nancy's father the oldest son of Joseph. Joseph left Hampshire Co, (now) W Va in 1787, but Thomas stayed there until 1800. Joseph Hanks married about 1756, likely in Lancaster Co, Va Nanny -----. In 1780-84 he was in Hampshire County, in 1787 in Kentucky.

Certainly Joseph Hanks and Richard Berry Sr were Nancy's grandfathers. After the death of her parents in Virginia, she went to Kentucky to live with her Berry grandparents. It would be natural for a little girl to live with her mother's mother. If she went about 1787 she found the Berry household consisting of Richard Jr 18, Francis 15, Jane 13 and Edward 11. The other older children were married. There is no evidence of Nancy living with her Hanks grandparents. After the death of Nancy's grandfather Hanks in 1793, the Hanks grandmother returned to Virginia.

#### The Parents

How and where did a Hanks meet a Berry?

In 1780 Joseph Hanks and wife Nanny were living in Hampshire Co, now W Va with 5 sons and 2 daughters. Joseph's son, Thomas, in his pension application (see below) said that in the fall of 1780 he was drafted from Hampshire Co and was in service in the Carolinas. In going to and from the Carolinas he may have visited with his uncle, James Hanks, who was living in Campbell Co, Va, west of Brookneal, 1780-87. On the James Hanks deeds are named Abraham and Thomas Hanks, possibly brothers.

In 1780 Richard Berry and wife Rachel were living in Charlotte Co, Va, just east of Brookneal, getting ready to go to Ky. Richard had land grants in Kentucky 1779 and 1780; he sold his Virginia land in 1780. The family likely moved to Kentucky in the spring of 1781. Berry had land surveyed May 5-1781. In 1780 the Richard Berry family consisted of 4 sons and 4 daughters. A daughter, Joanna, was married.

Thomas Hanks may have had an older brother (??James or Abraham) b c1757 who married c1781 (?Mary) Berry b c1761. This brother (possibly in service with Thomas) in visiting his uncle, James Hanks, may have met the Berry girl who lived nearby. The couple may have lived in Campbell Co (or Hampshire Co). A child b c1782 may have died young. Soon after Nancy's birth in 1784 her parents likely died and Nancy went to the Berry home in Kentucky at a tender age.



This is all speculation. There are no documents dealing with the parents. Their given names may never be known.

#### Thomas Hanks

When Joseph Hanks moved to Kentucky from Hampshire Co, now W Va in 1787 Thomas Hanks, his son, stayed behind. His Revolutionary pension application R4571, July 11-1833, says that he was born in Virginia in 1759 and while living in Hampshire County in the fall of 1780 he became a private under Capt Daniel Richardson. They marched south to Hillsborough, N C, then to the Cheraw Hills, S C on the Pee Dee river. They returned north about January 1781 and he helped guard prisoners at the Albemarle (Va) barracks until 1781 when he returned home. In 1781-82 he guarded prisoners at Winchester.

In his travels he passed close to Campbell County where his uncle, James Hanks, lived and to Charlotte County, where the Berrys lived. In 1800 he moved from Hampshire Co to Ross Co, Ohio. In 1833 he was in Logan Co, Ohio.

Could Thomas Hanks have been the father of Nancy Hanks Lincoln?

- (1) Thomas had a daughter Nancy (1813-1842) who married an Ellinger.
- (2) If Abraham Lincoln's grandfather had been living in 1833, Lincoln would have known it.
- (3) Thomas Hanks' children would have known it, if their nephew was President.
- (4) Lincoln implied that her parents were dead when Nancy went to Ky.

#### Lucy Hanks

Lucy Hanks Sparrow was said by Dennis F Hanks (1799-1892) to be the mother of Nancy (1866). Dennis' mother was another Nancy Hanks, born about 1784, daughter of Joseph of Nelson Co, Ky. This made Dennis a first cousin of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Dennis was raised by his aunt Elizabeth Hanks, who had married (Oct 17-1796) Thomas Sparrow. The Sparrows had no children and adopted Dennis, becoming his foster-parents. Thomas' brother, Henry Sparrow, married "Lucy Hanks" Apr 30-1790 making Lucy Dennis' foster-aunt. If Lucy was a Shipley, her children were first cousins of Abraham Lincoln's grandmother.

The first record of "Lucy Hanks" is on Nov 24-1789 in Mercer Co, Ky, when she was charged with fornication. The charge was discontinued May 25-1790. On Apr 26-1790 John Berry and Robert Mitchell signed Lucy's

consent for Henry Sparrow to get a marriage license. Berry was her nephew and Mitchell her brother-in-law, if she was a daughter of Robert Shipley. The marriage occurred April 30.

The name Lucy was not mentioned by the old people according to Charles Friend (1921), great-nephew of Jesse Friend, who married Mary, daughter of Joseph Hanks. No one named Lucy as mother of Nancy Hanks until 1865-66: William G Greene to Herndon 1865, Dennis F Hanks to Herndon 1866. Some person seems to have suggested Lucy as Nancy's mother and other persons passed on the idea. Squire R M Thompson did not mention Lucy until 1895, just before his death. Other members of the Thompson family and Thompson himself did not name Lucy earlier.

Who was Lucy? Likely a Shipley, for in the Kentucky court records she had no connection with any except Berrys and Shipleys. If she was a daughter of Robert and Sarah Shipley of Mecklenburg Co, N C, she was likely the youngest, born about 1765. Perhaps Sarah, wife of Robert Shipley in 1771, was a second wife. The oldest Shipley child was Robert, Jr, born about 1736. In 1771 Robert Shipley Sr moved from Virginia to North Carolina. What happened to Lucy (younger than some of her nieces and nephews) between 1771 and 1789? If married at 20 to a Hanks, it could hardly be to a son of Joseph of West Virginia. She likely married a North Carolina Hanks. Joseph Hanks did not sign her bond, Shipley relatives did. She was likely not of the Joseph Hanks family.

The confusion is understandable, if her name and Nancy's were both Hanks, but they were related through the Shipleys. If Lucy's husband died about 1787, Lucy, a young widow, may have thought of joining her <sup>aunt or</sup> sister, Rachel Berry (25 years older) on the Kentucky frontier. Somehow she may have picked up orphan Nancy, her greatniece, and brought her along. If Nancy went to Kentucky with Lucy, Lucy was not her mother, for Nancy went to Kentucky "not with her parents". Nancy never lived with Lucy. She lived with her Berry grandparents. But for Dennis "Lucy" may not have entered the picture.

#### Dennis Hanks

This record shows the close relationship between Dennis and the members of the Lincoln, Hanks and Sparrow families.

Dennis, first cousin of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, was born in Hardin Co, Ky in 1799 to Nancy Hanks, daughter of Joseph. About 1801 Nancy married Levi Hall. Dennis was "adopted" by his aunt Elizabeth Hanks Sparrow and her husband, Thomas. They were his real aunt and uncle. He lived with them



until their deaths in 1818. From 1803 to 1806 Dennis and the Sparrows lived in Mercer Co, Ky near Henry and Lucy (Hanks) Sparrow - his foster-uncle and foster-aunt. Dennis learned to call her "Aunt Lucy".

In 1806 they returned to Hardin County. Thomas Lincoln lived nearby 1808-11. In 1816 Dennis and his foster-parents and the Lincoln family moved to Indiana. In 1818 Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow died. Dennis was named the heir of Thomas Sparrow. Dennis moved in with the Lincolns. Thomas Lincoln married secondly in 1819 Sarah Bush Johnston. In 1821 Dennis married Elizabeth Johnston, b 1807, daughter of Sarah.

From 1824 to 1829 land suits in Hardin County involved Dennis and the Sparrows. Dennis may have met "Aunt Lucy" (d 1825) and found out that she was a Hanks before marriage and had brought Nancy Hanks to Kentucky. (See James A Peterson: In Re Lucey Hanks.) In 1831 Dennis went to Illinois about the same time as the Lincolns.

By 1860 Dennis was not sure how Lucy was related to him and to Nancy. If he knew his "Aunt Lucy" brought his cousin, Nancy to Kentucky, he may have assumed (incorrectly) that they were mother and daughter.

The Hanks Family

Joseph Hanks b c1732 Richmond Co, Va d 1793 Nelson Co, Ky  
m c1756 Lancaster Co, Va Nanny --- b c1738  
in Hampshire Co, now W Va 1780-84 - in Ky 1787

1. ?son b c1757 m c1781 Charlotte Co, Va --- Berry b c1761  
Ch: Nancy 1784-1818 m Jun 12-1806 Thomas Lincoln
2. Thomas b 1759 d aft 1833 m Elizabeth Ryan  
Hampshire Co to Ross Co, Ohio 1800 - in Logan Co, Ohio 1833  
Ch: Joseph, Peter 1796-1883, Absalom 1800-1872, Isaac b 1803,  
William, Nancy 1813-1842 (Ellinger), Sarah
3. Joshua b c1762
4. William b 1766 d aft 1850 Ill m Sep 12-1793 Elizabeth Hall  
Ch: James 1794-1852, Nancy, John 1802-1889, William 1804-1900,  
Elizabeth, Charles d 1852, Joseph, Cecelia, Lucinda 1813-  
1890, Andrew Jackson, Sarah
5. Charles b c1770
6. Elizabeth b 1776 d 1818 Ind m Oct 17-1796 Thomas Sparrow d 1818 Ind  
No children
7. Mary b c1778 d aft 1830 Ill m Dec 10-1795 Jesse Friend
8. Joseph b 1781 d Apr 4-1856 Ill m Nov 10-1810 Mary Young d 1872  
Ch: Jacob Vertress 1812-1894, Elizabeth 1813-1839, Susanna b 1816,  
Nancy 1818-1890, John b 1822, Joseph b 1825, Mary Ann b 1827,  
Amaltha 1830-1849, Caroline b 1833, Isabel b 1836
9. Nancy b c1784 d c1824 Ind m 1801 Levi Hall  
Ch: (Hanks) Dennis Friend 1799-1892 m 1821 Elizabeth Johnston  
Ch: (Hall) Squire m 1826 Matilda Johnston, Lydia, William,  
Alfred, Joseph, Mahala, Letitia



# The Shipley Family

Robert<sup>3</sup> (Robert<sup>2</sup>, Adam<sup>1</sup>) Shipley b 1713 Anne Arundel Co, Md, last record in Mecklenburg Co, N C 1789 - wife 1771, Sarah; m c1735 to Campbell Co, Va c1748, to North Carolina 1771

1. Robert b c1736 d aft 1809 m Rachel Prewitt.
2. Edward b c1738 m Elizabeth ---, in North Carolina 1789
3. Rachel b c1740 d 1804 Washington Co, Ky m c1756 Richard Berry (see p 9)
4. Ann b 1746 d 1828 m 1765 David McCord b 1744 d 1816  
Ch: William 1766-1824, Sarah (Campbell) b 1768, Robert 1770-1840, John 1773-1846, David 1781-1852, Ann (Elder) 1782-1855, James 1785-1873, Rosa 1788-1812, Mary 1790-1830
5. Naomi b Apr 26-1748 d 1790 m 1770 Robert Mitchell b Aug 22-1747 d 1792  
Ch: John 1771-1833, Robert, Daniel, Sarah (Thompson) 1778-1855
6. George b c1750 m May 5-1787 Elizabeth McCord - in Ky 1801  
Ch: Edward
7. Margaret b c1753 m1 Robert Sloan, m2 Matthew Armstrong  
Ch: Matthew Jr
8. Lucy b c1765 d c1825 to N C 1771, to Ky c1787 m1 --- Hanks  
m2 Apr 30-1790 Henry Sparrow b 1764 d 1840  
Ch: (Sparrow) James, Thomas, Henry 1802-1881, George, Elizabeth, Lucinda, Margaret, Mary

(Could George be b c1742 and be father of Lucy b c1768?)

(If Lucy was a granddaughter of Robert Shipley, then she went to Kentucky to live with her aunt Rachel. If she took Nancy along, Nancy would be her cousin's child, not her grandniece. We do not know how Nancy got to Kentucky. It was with some of her relatives.)

The Berry Family

Richard Berry b c1735 d 1798 Washington Co, Ky m c1750 Campbell or  
Charlotte Co, Va Rachel Shipley b c1740 d 1804 - Charlotte Co to Ky c1781

1. Joanna b c1757 m c1773 James Brumfield d 1795  
Ch: Robert, Richard, William 1778-1858 (m.1801 Ann Lincoln 1780-1845  
aunt of Abraham Lincoln), James, Samuel, David, John, Rachel
2. John b c1759 d 1795 m Aug 18-1786 Ann Mitchell - she m2 Jacob Durham  
Ch: Margaret, Rachel
3. ?daughter b c1761 m c1781 Charlotte Co, Va --- Hanks b c1757  
Ch: Nancy 1784-1818 m Jun 12-1806 Abraham Lincoln
4. Sarah b c1763, living 1798
5. Rachel b c1765 m Mar 30-1782 Thomas Pitman
6. Richard b Sep 2-1769 d Apr 16-1843 Callaway Co, Mo - to Mo 1820  
m Oct 22-1794 Mary Ewing b 1774 d Dec 3-1829  
Ch: Elizabeth (Yocum-Watts) b 1795, Nancy (Johnson) b 1797, Francis  
b 1799, Caleb E b 1801, John b 1803, Margaret b 1805, Edward  
Guither b 1807, Richard b 1810, Mary J (Yager) b 1812, Samuel  
H b 1815, Robert Mitchell b 1818
7. Francis b c1772 d Mar 17-1835 Washington Co, Ky m Nov 25-1799  
Elizabeth Brazelton b Apr 17-1779 d Apr 2-1848  
Ch: Richard S b 1800, Mary H (Mitchell) b 1801, Rachel Shipley  
(Slay) b 1803, Isaac N b 1806, Nancy B b 1808, Elizabeth b 1810,  
?Susan F (Yager)
8. Jane b Nov 3-1774 d Aug 6-1833 m Dec 29-1791 Daniel Mitchell
9. Edward b c1776 d 1843 will written Jul 11-1843 "of Van Buren (now  
Cass) Co, Mo", probated Oct 23-1843 Washington Co, Ky  
m Dec 15-1808 Mary Brazelton b Feb 21-1783  
Ch: Richard, William, Edward, Mary Ann (Pendleton  
-Mitchell), Naomi (Redding),  
Amanda (Buckley), and others 1815-1848

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Raymond M Bell  
1 September 1981



MRS. NANCY HANKS, WIFE OF JOSEPH SR.

Canon City Colo. Feb. 25, 1895

The mother of Joseph Hanks (Jr) was Lucy Lee of Virginia  
a relation of General Robert E. Lee.

*have seen*  
Mrs. M.A. Wilson

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Canon City Colo. Mar, 17 1925

About the given name of the mother of Joseph Hanks she (mother)  
is not certain, having obtained that information recently from  
my father's sister. He told her himself that his mother was a  
Lee but she does not remember whether she said her name was Nancy  
or Lucy.

Mrs. M.A. Wilson.

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